



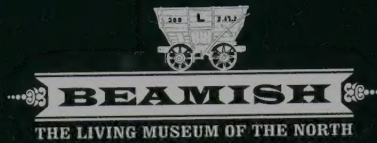
# BEAMISH

THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE NORTH



THE EXPERIENCE  
OF A LIFETIME





## WELCOME TO BEAMISH – THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE NORTH

**T**hank you for buying our new guide book. It has been written by our staff to help you gain even more enjoyment and pleasure from your visits to Beamish. I hope it will also help to enhance your appreciation of our purpose in the North East and explain the important role we still have to play in preserving the region's past way of life.

Beamish is not a traditional museum. Inspired by the vision of Frank Atkinson more than 40 years ago, we are committed to creating a living, working, open-air museum that trusts in people to bring the past to life. Here you won't find dead objects displayed out of context in glass cases or presented in interactive exhibitions. Instead, you will meet our staff and volunteers in period costume who tell the story of everyday life in the North East through the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods.

Whenever possible, you will see our collections working as they would originally have done. Kitchen ranges are lit to prepare food for you to taste. Georgian and Victorian farms are worked using traditional agricultural methods and help to preserve rare regional breeds. Restored electric trams, trains and buses transport visitors around the beautiful 400-acre (162-ha) site, completing more than a million passenger journeys each year. Signs around the Museum are kept down to a minimum to create a detailed and authentic portrayal of the region's past. Everything you will see is the product of many years of careful research by expert curators. Knowledge and attention to the smallest period detail is very important to us.

Perhaps most importantly of all, Beamish is about people. We exist as a resource for the people of the North East and our purpose is to preserve their heritage and tell their story. Most of our buildings were originally found in towns and villages across the region and have been carefully reconstructed at Beamish to prevent them being lost. Many of the objects in our collection have been donated directly by individuals. A strong bond connects Beamish to individuals and communities across the region and we remain dependent on this strong support for our success.

Finally, and above all, I hope you will enjoy your experience of Beamish and take away fond memories to share with others, as well as a deeper understanding and appreciation of the region's history. Beamish is a rare and special place, where the past really does meet the present.



Richard Evans  
Director



# HOW TO SEE BEAMISH

The map opposite shows the layout of the 300-acre (120-ha) Museum. The Museum areas are linked by a series of footpaths, all of which take you into the regional past. In addition, trams and buses link most areas of the Museum. The trams regularly run in both directions. All trams are free.

- Disabled Visitors: this is a large open-air museum with many period buildings and some steep slopes. Wheelchair users are advised to be accompanied. A free leaflet to assist disabled visitors is available at Admissions in the Entrance Building.
- First Aid: if you need assistance, please speak to any member of staff.
- Dogs should be kept on leads and must be accompanied at all times. They are not allowed into any building (unless they are assistance dogs).
- Smoking is not permitted in any of the buildings or refreshment areas, or on any vehicles.
- Please do not take food or drink into any period building.
- Visitors are welcome to make videos and take photographs for their personal use only. Written permission is required for commercial photography.
- The Museum is open all year round, though some areas may be closed during the winter.
- All museum buildings close 15 minutes before the advertised closing time of the Museum. The last tram leaves the Town and Pockerley 15 minutes before the advertised closing time of the Museum.  
The last guided tour of the Drift Mine is 30 minutes before the advertised closing time of the Museum.

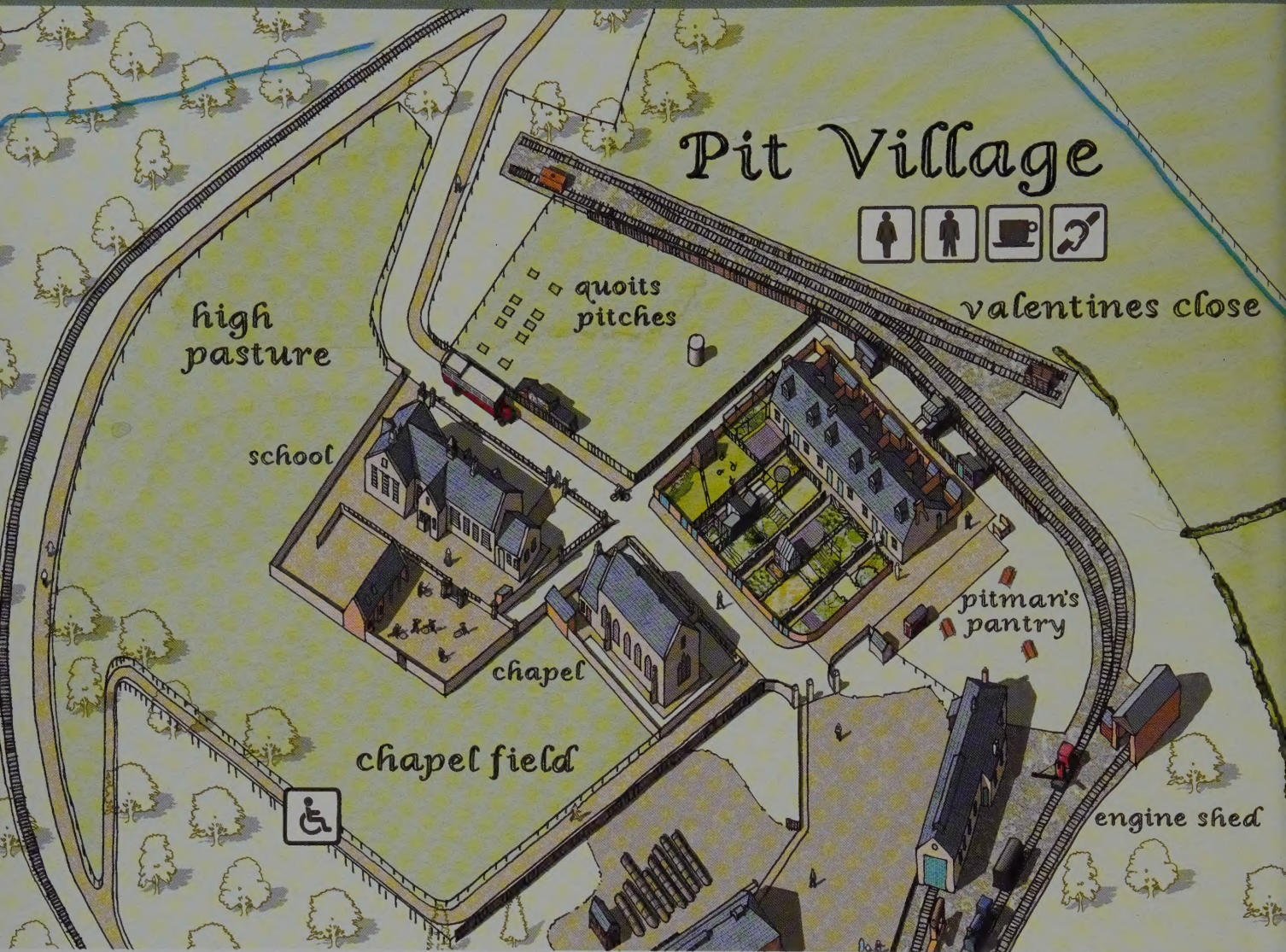
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# THE PIT VILLAGE



No re-creation of the history of the North East would be complete without a colliery and the people who worked and lived in and around it. The extraction and use of coal powered this region. At its peak, in 1913, the Great Northern Coalfield employed nearly a quarter of a million men and boys, producing over 56 million tons of coal annually from about 400 pits.

Towns such as Seaham Harbour, West Hartlepool and Bedlington owed their very existence to coal.

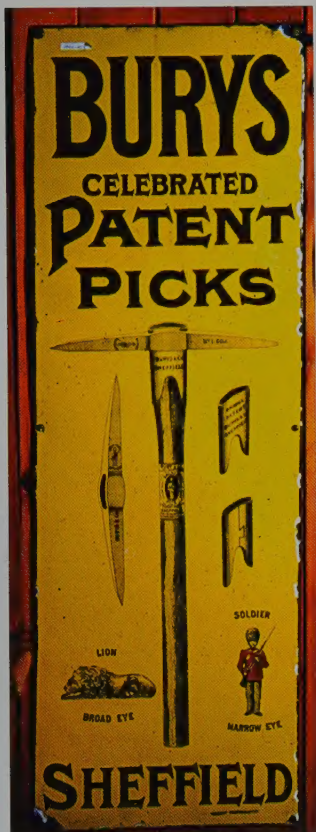
Mining changed the landscape, the patterns of settlement and the traditions and way of life of the region.







Above: The Pit Village with Pit Cottages, Board School and Chapel.  
Right: The Colliery Yard with Winding House and Heapstead.



Pit communities are distinctive even today, though the collieries themselves have gone.

The Pit Village at Beamish is built around a re-creation of a typical pit as it would have been in the early 1900s. A row of pit cottages, an engine shed and a tall, stone engine house, together with a Board School and a Methodist Chapel, have been carefully dismantled and rebuilt here. All have been saved from various parts of the region.



# THE PIT COTTAGES



THE "EXPRESS" COMBINED CLOSE AND OPEN FIRE RANGE, 28 INCHES HIGH.  
OVEN AND BACK BOILER.

SHOWN AS A CLOSE-FIRE RANGE. FOR APPEARANCE AS AN OPEN-FIRE RANGE, SEE PLATE 7-K.  
IF WITH 7-P IMPROVED DRAW-OUT HOOD AND SLIDING FIRE-COVER, EXTRA, SEE PRICE LIST.



The Pit Cottages from Francis Street, Hetton-le-Hole, were built in the 1860s for pitmen and their families. Houses and coal were provided free in exchange for labour. Pit communities were close knit, consisting of mutually dependent families. In 1913, miners' wages were comparatively high, so they could afford to indulge their taste for expensive furniture which is represented in the cottages. The backyards incorporated 'netties' or earth closets, which were emptied weekly by nightsoil men. A standpipe, one for every six houses, provided water that had to be fetched for each house by bucket. Pitmen were prodigious





Left: Pit pony  
Pip with tub in  
the Colliery Yard.

Bottom:  
Cleaning the  
steel and  
brassware in  
No.3 Francis  
Street.

Opposite page,  
bottom left:  
Contemporary  
image of a range  
from a trade  
catalogue in the  
collections.

gardeners, breeders of animals and often gamblers. Leek growing, pigeon fancying and whippet racing were popular pastimes.

No. 2 Francis Street is furnished as it would have been for a Methodist family, while No. 3 represents a Roman Catholic household. No. 4 is shown as a sparser house being occupied by

a poor miner's widow and her sons.

Galvanised tin baths hang in the backyards. The family – the pitmen in particular – bathed in front of the kitchen range. Some miners avoided washing their backs, believing this would weaken them.







Top: Pit Cottage Gardens.

Above: Lamp Cabin in the Colliery Yard.

Right: Harvest Festival display in the Chapel in the Pit Village.



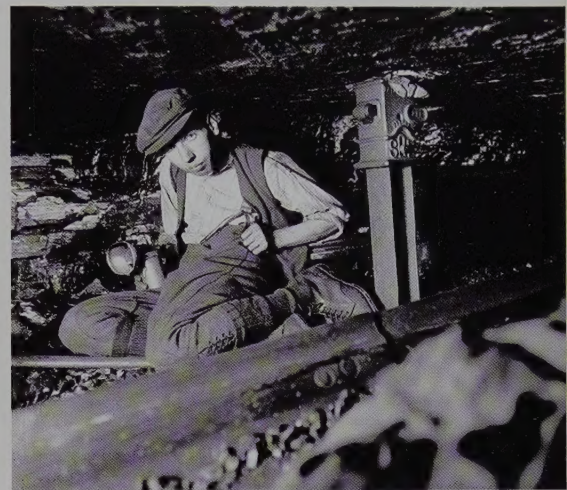




Left: Baking in No.3 Francis Street.

Below: Archive photograph of a miner in a typical North Eastern coal seam.

Bottom: Pitmen in the Colliery Yard.





# THE SCHOOL AND CHAPEL

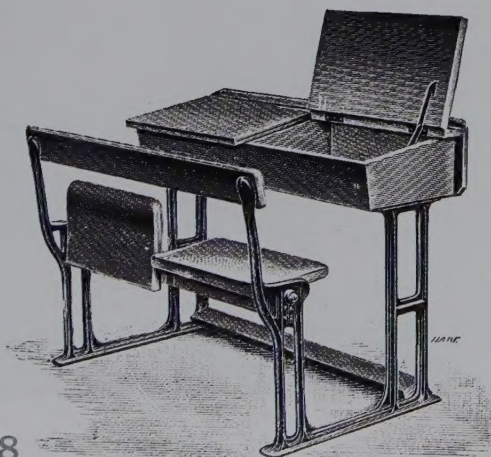


The Beamish Board School once stood in nearby East Stanley. It was first opened in 1892 and, when it closed nearly a century later, three classrooms were rebuilt at Beamish. They could have accommodated up to 200 children. At the turn of the century, school attendance was compulsory; the

school-leaving age was 12 years. Bright pupils who reached basic levels in reading, writing and arithmetic (the three Rs) often left school early in order to support their families.

Board schools were built to high architectural standards. In an era of poor hygiene, it was considered important to design buildings to be light and airy. The purpose of education at this time was to create law-abiding useful citizens. Children were taught to 'know their place' and to 'show respect for their betters'.

Learning was instilled by rote and repetition. Doing sums – pounds, shillings and pence – and chanting multiplication tables were daily





rituals. As well as the three Rs, instruction was given in geography, history, domestic science, needlework, music, religious knowledge, hygiene and exercise drill.

Discipline was strict, with the cane as the ultimate deterrent, though it was seldom used. The punishment book recorded all misdemeanours. Despite the best efforts of the School Board, children were often absent throughout outbreaks of illnesses such as typhoid, tuberculosis, diphtheria, measles and scarlatina. Equally, in rural areas, seasonal events like harvest time led to many absences.

The playground provided space for exercise lessons in good weather. Children also played games such as conkers, marbles and hopscotch. Metal hoops and sticks, known as boolers, were very popular, as were singing and skipping games, distinctive to each locality.



## THE CHAPEL



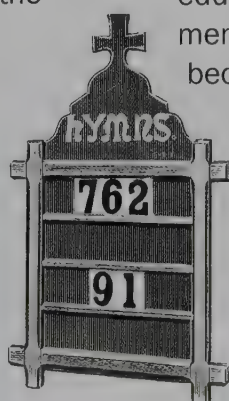
Pit Hill Methodist Chapel was built in 1854 to serve the local mining and farming communities. Methodism flourished in the North East. Founded by John and Charles Wesley, Methodism came to encompass several shades of opinion. Pit Hill represents the Wesleyans, sometimes regarded as more respectable than the Primitive Wesleyans who were fiercely radical and independent.

The Chapel fulfilled distinct social and spiritual needs of its members. In addition to the many services, there were women's meetings,



Bible classes, temperance groups, choirs and Sunday schools. As the local mines expanded, this Chapel's membership increased and the building was enlarged in 1876 and again in 1904. At a time when opportunities for education were limited, the Chapel taught its members skills which they used and many became influential members of the Liberal and Labour parties, as well as the Trade Unions.

The usual Church festivals were celebrated and the Chapel and Sunday School Anniversaries were also important, featuring special events, concerts, talks and magic lantern shows.

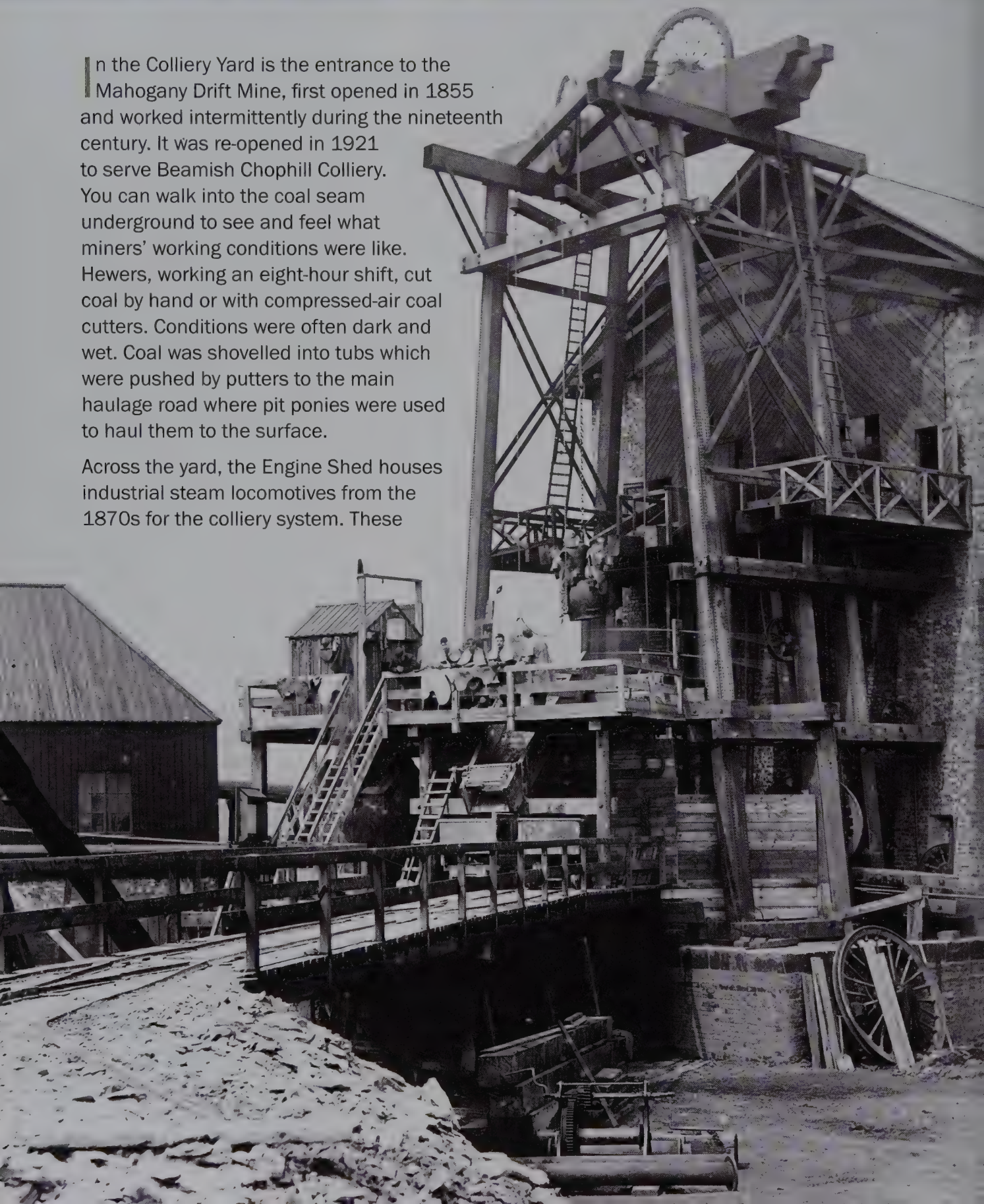




# THE COLLIERY

In the Colliery Yard is the entrance to the Mahogany Drift Mine, first opened in 1855 and worked intermittently during the nineteenth century. It was re-opened in 1921 to serve Beamish Chophill Colliery. You can walk into the coal seam underground to see and feel what miners' working conditions were like. Hewers, working an eight-hour shift, cut coal by hand or with compressed-air coal cutters. Conditions were often dark and wet. Coal was shovelled into tubs which were pushed by putters to the main haulage road where pit ponies were used to haul them to the surface.

Across the yard, the Engine Shed houses industrial steam locomotives from the 1870s for the colliery system. These







Left: Undercutting coal at Hartley Main Colliery.

Opposite page: Shaft sinking at Wallsend Colliery, 1894.

include two vertical-boilered 'Coffee Pot' engines by Head Wrightson (of Stockton on Tees) from 1871 and 1873 respectively, and a saddle tank built in 1877 by Stephen Lewin of Poole. There are also a number of chaldron wagons from the Londonderry Railway, built in the 1870s and used as late as 1970 at Seaham Harbour.

In front of the Drift Mine is the Colliery Lamp Cabin. This is where the miners collected their safety lamp before their shift, and returned it afterwards. Well-built brick buildings with panelled decoration, such as this one, were common at collieries in the early 1900s. At the height of the coal industry in Durham, coal companies wanted their collieries to look modern and be built in a 'corporate style'.

The tall stone engine house came from Beamish 2nd Pit, known as Chophill. Its steam winding engine was built by J. & G. Joicey & Co. of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1855. This is now the sole survivor of a type of engine once common in the northern coalfield. To the rear of the winding house is a

jack engine, used to lower heavy equipment down the shaft. Adjoining the engine house are a wooden heapstead building and screens, originally from Ravensworth Park Drift mine in Gateshead. Here, cages were drawn up from the shaft beneath. Tubs were pulled clear and coal tipped onto the screens for sorting before being loaded into the chaldron wagons below. Men as well as coal travelled in the cages.

The sinking winch, collected from Silksworth Colliery, dates from the 1860s. These were used when shafts were being sunk or widened. At the edge of the wood, beyond the winding engine house, is a small powder house from Houghton Colliery used to store explosives for use underground.



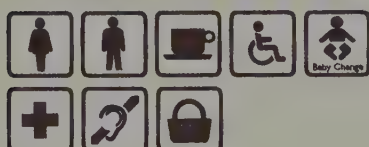
Mining was a dangerous occupation. Roof falls, fires, explosions, suffocating gases and flooding were some of the hazards which took many lives. Our school's logbook records 'Many of our children have lost fathers or brothers. The intense grief is unbearable. So few were present that we did not mark the register': in 1909 an explosion at West Stanley Colliery had killed 168 men and boys.



# THE TOWN



## The Town



The Town represents a typical north-eastern market town of the years leading up to the First World War. The region's towns grew rapidly from the 1870s onwards, with some seeing considerable improvements in sanitation, water supply, street lighting and other amenities.

At the west end of the Town is a Victorian park with ornamental flower beds and a bandstand by Walter MacFarlane & Co. of Glasgow, originally from Saltwell Park in Gateshead. Brass band concerts are held here throughout the year. Municipal parks were a typical feature of Victorian towns. Where housing conditions were often insanitary and overcrowded, the park

provided an opportunity for exercise, fresh air and entertainment.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, many towns were beginning to have their own supplies of gas and it was especially for public street lighting that gas was first produced. The North East pioneered the introduction of electric power for







Above: Town Street view of the Garage and Co-op.



domestic applications, heating and lighting, and also for industry and transport.

One of the most remarkable features of the period was the rapid expansion of tramway systems, providing cheap transport. By 1913, motor cars were also gaining a reputation for sound construction and reliability, and production-line cars were being manufactured in this country for the first time.





# RAVENSWORTH TERRACE



The fine row of early Victorian houses, Ravensworth Terrace, from Bensham in Gateshead, was originally built between 1830 and 1845. These were fashionable houses built for professional people and tradesmen. Once, they were occupied by such people as John Wilson Carmichael, the landscape and marine painter, William Collard, the engraver (in the early 1830s), and later on by Alexander Gillies, Mayor of Gateshead.

No. 2 Ravensworth Terrace represents the home of an unmarried, single woman earning a living through teaching singing, piano and elocution. Typically, she might have inherited the house

Above: Parlour of No.2 Ravensworth Terrace.

Left: Staffordshire flat-back ornament.





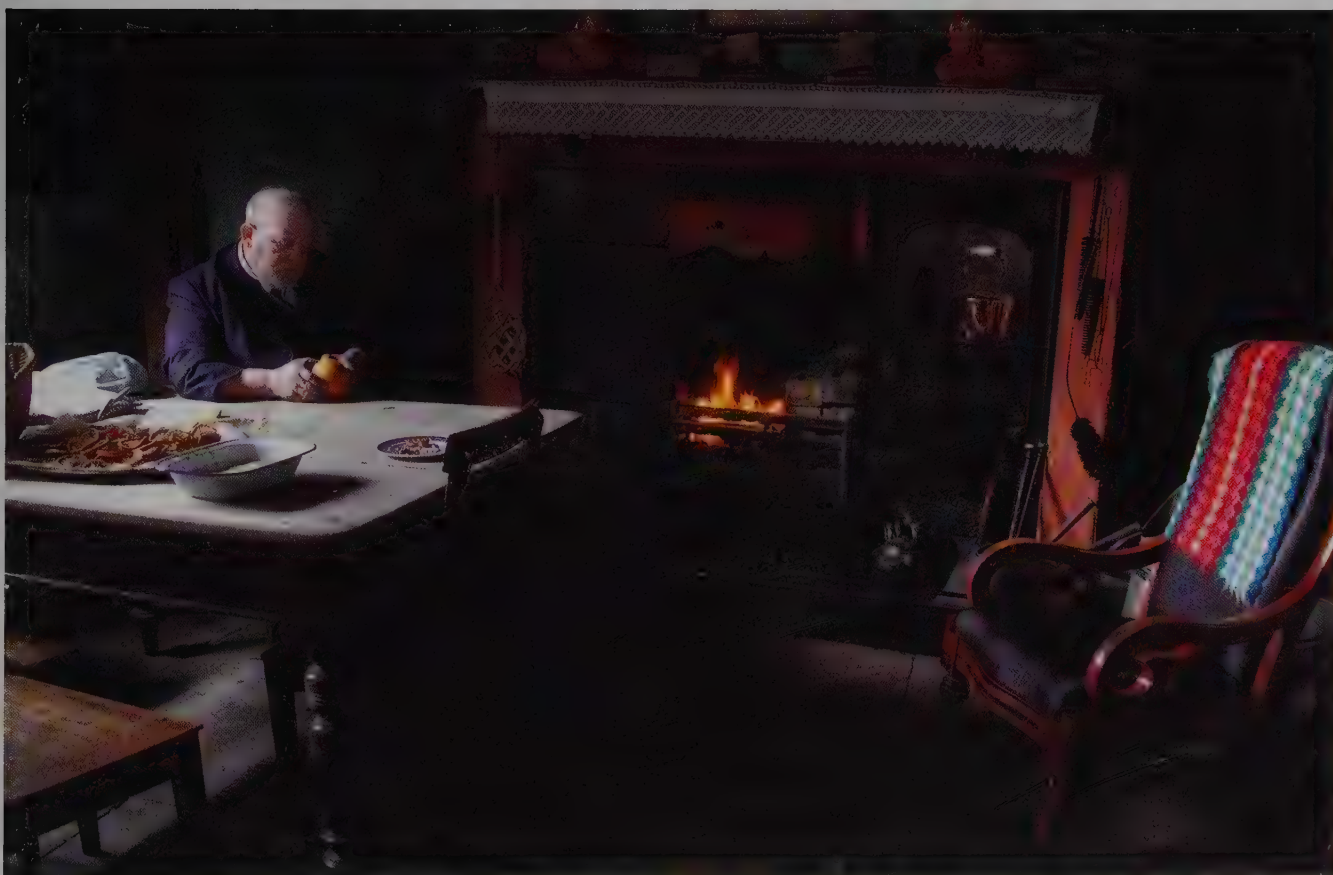


Left: Stained glass window on the landing of the Music Teacher's House depicting an allegorical figure, probably Persephone, goddess of spring.  
Below: Kitchen in No.2 Ravensworth Terrace.

from her parents, explaining the mid-Victorian, old-fashioned feel and the oil lamps.

Pupils would be taught in the cluttered parlour with its drapes and heavy curtains. The furniture is of good-quality walnut and the fine balloon back chairs are by Sopwith, the renowned cabinet makers of Newcastle upon Tyne.

The kitchen floor and hallway are laid with stone flags and the cooking would have been done on the early cast-iron range. The main bedrooms are full of heavy mahogany furniture and there is a large four-poster bed. There is no bathroom or water closet. Each bedroom would have its own washstand, and the maid would have carried coals and water to each room.





# THE DENTIST AND THE SOLICITOR



In the early 1900s, to call yourself a dentist meant that you had either trained at a Dental College or as an apprentice alongside a qualified dentist. It was common to set up practice in domestic houses and live adjacent to, or upstairs from, the surgery and associated rooms. Tooth pullers at this time still operated from local street markets. It is noteworthy that, until 1921, any person could inform the public that they practised dentistry provided that the title 'dentist' was not used. Most people only visited the dentist in cases of extreme necessity. The cost of an extraction was quite a deterrent. Anaesthetics tended to be unreliable





and though nitrous oxide (laughing gas) was sometimes used, often only oil of cloves was used to dull the pain! At No. 3 Ravensworth Terrace, the downstairs parlour is used as a waiting room and upstairs are the surgery, recovery room and technician's workshop. The surgery is dominated by the cast-iron dental chair with dental drill, which inevitably required precise drilling and footwork.

The technician's room was used for the preparation of dentures. Wax impressions were taken and plaster of Paris used to prepare models of teeth.

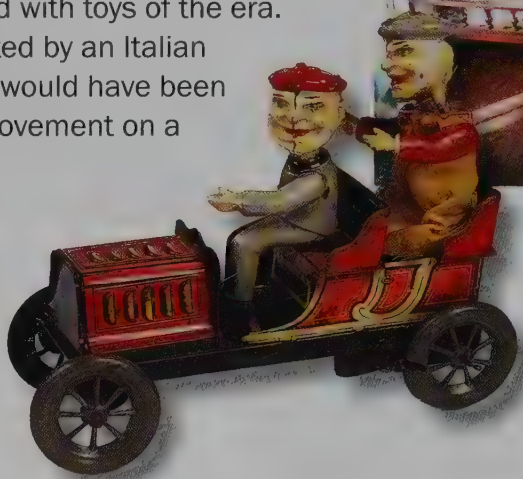
The upstairs corridor leads from the surgery to the dentist's own home, which would have been up to date and modern in its furnishings. A nursery at the front of the house is cheerfully furnished with toys of the era. The master bedroom is dominated by an Italian brass bedstead. The bathroom would have been recently installed – a great improvement on a previous lack of facilities.



## THE SOLICITOR

Along the terrace is the Solicitor's Office, based on that of Robert Spence Watson, a Newcastle Quaker and solicitor by profession. Well known locally, he became a national figure in politics, education and the art of industrial negotiation. The office of J. & R.S. Watson is typical of many legal practices of the early 1900s and is very old-fashioned.

The partner's or principal's office is at the front of the house. On the partner's desk are documents tied up with pink ribbon. The



Top right: Bathroom in Dentist's House.

Above: Nursery in Dentist's House.

Opposite page, bottom: 'Tugging at an eye tooth' by George Cruikshank, 1821.

solicitor acted as Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths.

Around the walls are deed boxes from prominent local families. The office is old-fashioned even for the Edwardian era. Both offices have a distinctly Dickensian feel. There are no typewriters, telephones or duplicators, and even the clock has stopped.



# THE CO-OP



The Co-operative movement revolutionised the lives of working-class people. It gave them more control over the way they shopped for basic goods, ensuring always correct weights and measures and the purity of goods and, importantly, it provided a dividend to members.

The Co-op movement had its own factories, which produced everything from shirts and soap to furniture, in good working conditions – no more than an eight-hour working day.

The Co-op also had its own bank, and its own insurance and building societies; it sent its own MPs to Westminster, and provided reading





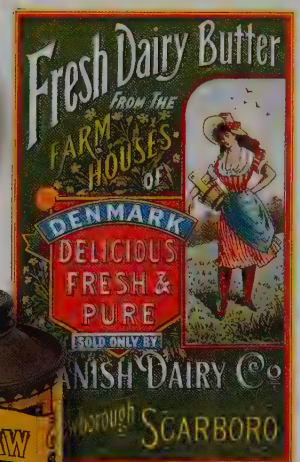
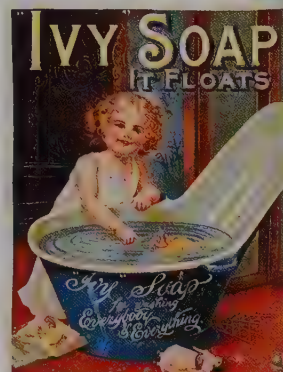
Left: Hardware Department.  
Opposite page, top: Grocer's Department.  
Opposite page, bottom: Archive photograph of a North Eastern Co-op.

rooms, as well as venues for meetings and social functions. It also encouraged women's suffrage.

The Co-operative Store here came originally from nearby Annfield Plain and dates back, in part, to 1870. Now housing grocery, drapery and hardware departments, it represents a typical store of the period. The overhead Lamson-Paragon Cash System operates a series of hollow balls, which carry money via overhead rails to a central cash office where the cashier recorded all transactions for the dividend.

In the Grocer's Department, most foods were weighed and packed by hand for each customer. Note the lentils, split peas and sugar, all in colour-coded paper bags. Butter was cut and patted into shape from large casks. Biscuits were sold loose. Branded pre-packed goods were starting to appear. In relation to wages, food was more expensive for the average family in the early 1900s than it is today.

The Drapery Department stocked clothing and furnishing fabrics, haberdashery, and a range of buttons, hooks and feathers, as well as collars, hats, shoes, gloves and other accessories. It also provided materials from which to make workmen's clothing, such as pit hoppers – working men's short trousers typically worn down the pit.



The Hardware Department sold mangles, Pelaw Polish, paints, pots and pans, miners' lamps, picks, shovels and candles. The pitmen had to provide all their own gear.

Co-op prices were not always the cheapest but the goods were reliable and the dividend was very welcome. The Co-op was renowned for providing 'Everything from the cradle to the grave'.





# THE PRINTER'S AND THE SUN INN



At the Printer's across the street from the Co-op Store, the news headlines are prominently displayed outside the branch office of a local newspaper. The office was a distribution point; newspapers printed at Head Office on high-speed presses were distributed to branch offices to be sold over the counter in newsagents and by street-sellers. It also acted as a base for a local reporter to report the latest stories by telephone, the new technology in 1913.



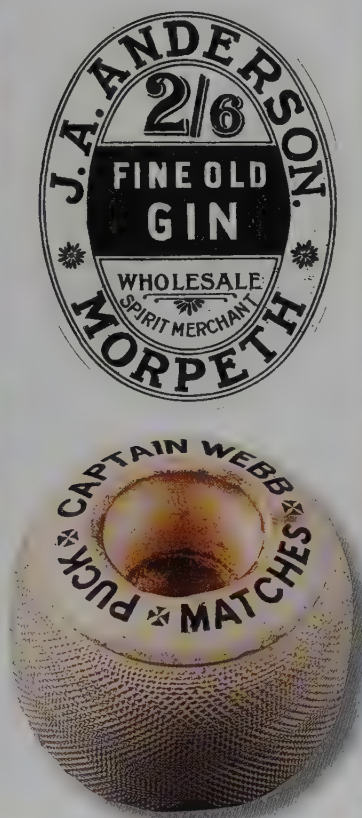


Advertising copy could also be left at the downstairs counter. Upstairs a jobbing printer produced posters, business cards, advertising material and private and commercial stationery for local customers. For short runs, the Arab Platen Press might have been used. For more extensive orders and posters, the fast semi-automatic Wharfedale Press would have been employed. At the rear of the Print Shop stands the magnificently ornamented Columbian Press, easily identifiable by its eagle.

Centre: Match holder and striker.

Left: Enamel advertising sign and label.

Below: The Sun Inn.



## THE SUN INN

The Sun Inn, originally from High Bondgate in Bishop Auckland, dates back to the 1860s. The interior has been altered many times and it has been rebuilt much as it was originally with the 'Bar' and 'Select'. Inside the pub features magnificent glass mirrors, along with other typical furnishings. Draught beers and lager, very much the new drink before the First World War, are sold.





## THE GARAGE AND THE SWEET SHOP



The Beamish Motor & Cycle Works is a typical town garage of the pre-First World War period. This Edwardian building fits the early requirements of The Cycle and Motor Trades Review, 1908, which praised a garage as 'a shop for the supply of the motorist's numerous accessories... an engineering works... and care and shelter for the complete car'. Early garages combined the skills of the blacksmith, wheelwright and coach builder. Petrol was supplied not from pumps, but in two-gallon cans.

The showroom displays new and second-hand cars, motorcycles and bicycles. Headlamps and horns were supplied as extras. A variety of

vehicles is shown, notably the expensive and rare Armstrong Whitworth car of 1907, made in Newcastle upon Tyne, a pre-war Renault and a Model T Ford nicknamed the "Tin Lizzy". A Dene motorcycle of 1912 is a rare survivor from the works in Newcastle.

**PRATTS**  
On top in all Road Tests



In 1913, there was little standardisation of spare parts. Most were made or remade in the workshop. Lighting sets, gas, electric and acetylene were supplied separately. A notable and unique vehicle is the SHEW (Seaham Harbour Engine Works) car, built in 1906 and used at Seaham to investigate the potential for

putting it into production there, although this never took place.

Garages of this size hired out charabancs and were often haulage contractors. To the rear of the Garage visitors can see a variety of machine tools, a Blackstone oil engine and a display of motorcycles.



## THE SWEET SHOP

In the Edwardian era, sweets were not as cheap and widely available as they are today, but were becoming more common due to the availability of cocoa and sugar from the Empire and its modern transport system.

In the nineteenth century the combination of sugar and cocoa revolutionised the confectionery trade and led to chocolate being made specifically for eating. Improvements in mechanisation and distribution created a growing market. The firms of Fry's, Terry's, Cadbury and Rowntree's were pioneers in this expansion.

Inside, the Jubilee Confectioner's has fine mahogany fittings, mirrors and shelves packed with traditional glass jars full of sugared almonds, black bullets and sour plums, amongst others.

In the factory behind the shop, visitors can experience the whole process of traditional sweet making, see the sugar being boiled in huge, copper boiling pans, and watch the sugar rollers cutting the sweets into different shapes of bullets, stars and fishes.



# THE TOWN STABLES



Through the archway adjoining The Sun Inn are the Town Stables and Carriage House. In the early 1900s the main form of transport was still the horse, and most inns and pubs had stables associated with them. Some were small, catering for a couple of travellers' horses, while other yards developed into major enterprises with stables, vehicles for hire, general livestock feed suppliers and what we would now call transport contractors.

During this period, trains, buses and cars were competing with horses, but most local transport and deliveries were still achieved with horse-drawn vehicles.

Above: Carriage House.







The Town Stables and Carriage House represent a jobmaster's yard, meaning the supply of a variety of horses and vehicles for a variety of tasks and jobs. The harness room, with fittings from Callaly Castle in Northumberland, displays

both working and exhibition harness; the wonderful crested driving harness was used in 1897 at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Above: Archive photograph of a local Carriage Works.

Right: Interior of the Carriage House.

Far right: Horse-drawn vehicle at work.





# THE BANK AND MASONIC HALL



**B**arclay & Company was formed in 1896 by the amalgamation of some 20 private banks. The large north-eastern banks, Backhouse and Company, Woods and Company and J.W. Pease and Company, became part of the new grouping. The new company still had strong links with its Quaker family origins.

The local Head Office was in Darlington and most of the Directors had been partners in Backhouses. Most major banking decisions were still taken in the region rather than in London. Personal accounts were only a small part of the Bank's business compared to a modern-day bank.

The Bank is a four-storey building designed to give its customers confidence in its financial stability and security.

The Swedish 'Imperial Red' granite frontage is typical of banks of the era. The upper storeys have been assembled from bricks and quoins saved from Park House, Gateshead.

Downstairs, visitors can look into the safes and strongrooms.







Masonic Halls were a common feature in north-eastern towns and, in the early years of the twentieth century, freemasonry was more visible and Masonic processions were commonly seen. Members provided a range of local support in areas such as education and healthcare.

With the assistance of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Durham, the Museum has saved the frontage of the former Park Terrace Masonic Hall at Sunderland, originally built in 1869. The Hall was in use until 1932

when it was replaced by the new Wearside Masonic Hall.

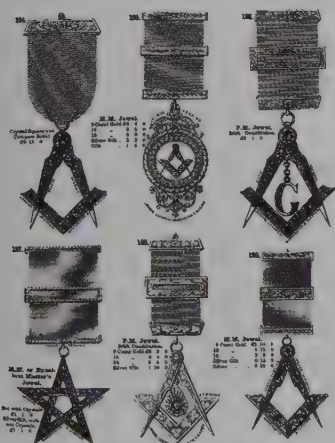


Top: Interior of the Masonic Hall.

Above: Interior of Park Terrace, Masonic Hall c.1889.

Left: Sunderland ware jug with Masonic symbols.

Far left: Masonic jewels from a trade catalogue.



GEORGE KENNING, LONDON (LONDON, BIRMINGHAM & GLoucester)





# THE RAILWAY STATION



The North East led the world in the development of railways. By 1880, the North Eastern Railway Company owned a network of lines covering Northumberland, County Durham and North Yorkshire, and was the lifeline for many small towns and villages. Importantly it provided a transport network distributing coal and moving heavy industry.

Rowley Station is a typical country station, as it would have been in about 1910. First built in 1867, it came from Rowley, a village near Consett. The Station never had gas or electricity and was always lit by oil. Approaching from the Town, a wrought-iron footbridge from Howden-le-Wear







takes visitors across the railway line towards the signal box, which came from Carr House East, also near Consett, and dates from 1896.

The North East Railway Company was primarily a freight haulier and a variety of wagons, particularly those for coal, can be seen in the sidings. The coal drops (from West Boldon) are typical of the NER system and were once a common feature of smaller goods yards and coal depots in the region.

The Goods Shed was moved from Alnwick and the weighbridge at the yard entrance is from Glanton, the coal office from Hexham and the nearby cast-iron footbridge from Dunston, Gateshead.

At present passengers can take a short return trip along the line from the Station on some summer weekends, depending on the availability of steam locomotives.

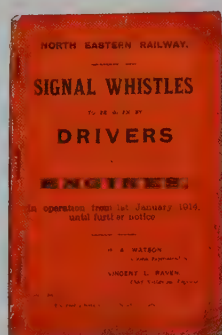
Above: Engine in steam at Rowley Station.  
Below: Station Yard, Engine Shed and Regional Museum Stores.



Centre: Brass snuff box of 1854.

Far right: Archive photograph of a local Carriage Works.

Opposite page: Steam traction engine in the Station Yard.





# TRAMS AND TRANSPORT



By the end of the nineteenth century, the growing towns and cities of the region needed a cheap and efficient transport system. At first horse-drawn omnibuses were used, and then horse-drawn trams. Steam trams never really took off. From the late 1890s, electric tramways were developed across the region.



The Beamish tramway has

been operating for over 30 years and provides a mile-long circuit transporting visitors around the Museum. The Beamish fleet consists of six restored trams. Blackpool 31 was built in 1901 and was in service there until 1984. Sheffield 264 dates back to 1907 and operated until 1956. This tram is not running at present and is due to be thoroughly overhauled. Tram 196 is a foreign tram originating in Oporto, Portugal. Built to a pre-First World War design, it has been painted in an appropriate local livery.

Gateshead 10, one of three local trams in the Beamish fleet, was built in 1925 and remained in service until 1951. Newcastle 114 was



built in 1901 for the opening of the Newcastle Corporation Tramway. It was sold to Sheffield in 1940 and eventually withdrawn from service in the early 1950s. It was discovered by the Museum being used as a henhouse on a farm near Scunthorpe and was carefully restored to working condition in 1996. Sunderland 16 was built in 1900, substantially modified after the First World War, and ceased running in 1954, after which the body was used as a farm toolshed. It has also been fully restored.

A bus service also runs between the Town and the Pit Village using a replica bus of a type used by Northern General Transport Co. Ltd.

– a subsidiary of Gateshead tramways. In the early 1900s, it operated 27 buses of which 17 were Daimler CC double deckers, the last to arrive being J2503. Another bus used at Beamish is based on the famous London B Type double decker. A third single-deck bus provides a fully accessible service around the Museum site.



Above:  
Gateshead 10  
tram in the Town  
Street.



Left: Replica  
bus.

## MENDING THE ROADS

As roads became more heavily used, so they became prone to rapid deterioration and wear. Efforts to consolidate them generally failed in the face of use. John McAdam introduced a robust and simple system of water-bound road which soon became the standard method of road construction. From the 1870s most local councils used steam rollers to maintain these water-bound roads. As road traffic increased, a layer of bitumen was added. Two steam rollers built by Fowler of Leeds may be seen around the Museum at various times, undertaking road repairs. A typical living van and selection of road repair implements complete the scene.





# Home Farm



Home Farm is set in the early 1870s, a period when Victorian farming was reaching its technical and industrial peak.

Agriculture was, and is, an important industry in the region; new ideas in livestock breeding were pioneered in the North East. Home Farm was once part of the Beamish Estate, owned by the Eden and Shafto families. John Eden was a prominent member of the Royal Agricultural Society in the early 1800s and ensured that many new ideas of agriculturalists were introduced here. The farm was originally managed and maintained as a highly mechanised 'model farm'.







In around 1799 a horse gin and barn thresher were installed, an important step in agriculture from hand to horsepower. Around 1850 the foldyards were developed and a steam engine replaced the horses as a source of power.

Above: Home Farm Midden Yard, with Clydesdale horses.

Below left: Farmhouse at Home Farm.

Below: Brass milk churn.







The heart of the farm kitchen is a large range by Moffat of Gateshead and a long farmhouse table where the family as well as farm labourers were fed. Oat bread hangs up above the range on a rack known as a flake. Buildings around the farm include a combined pigsty and henhouse. The pigs provided both warmth and protection from predators for the hens.

Some animals can be seen in the fields around the Museum or at Home Farm in the buildings. Although in a traditional setting, our animals are cared for to current standards and using modern veterinary techniques. Animal breeds include

Shorthorn cattle (descendants of the famous Durham ox), Teeswater sheep, Saddleback pigs, Clydesdale horses, Dales ponies and Cleveland Bay horses, a rare breed. Around the farm may be seen a wide range of geese, ducks and farmyard poultry. Heavy horse work can be seen around the Museum.







Top: Pigsties at the Farmhouse.

Opposite page, bottom: Farm horse at work.

Right: The Forge Yard area.







There are also implement sheds where the machinery needed to work the farm can be seen, including examples of regional horse-drawn vehicles. These include the two-wheeled coup cart, the spindle-sided harvest cart, the ingenious turnip-chopping cart built by William Elder of Berwick, and

Above: Durham Shorthorn bull at Home Farm.

Right: Archive photograph of steam threshing at Low Waskerley Farm c.1900.





# THORLEY'S



## FOOD FOR CATTLE.

Left: Cattle food advertisement.

Below: Ploughing below Pockerley Manor.

the very fine beast cart used for transporting stock around the farm or to market.

As an Estate Farm, Home Farm's operation was fairly self-contained and, as a result, the farm had its own blacksmith and forge, necessary to shoe horses, repair and maintain the farm's machinery and occasionally re-tyre the wooden wheels of the farm's wagons and carts.





# POCKERLEY OLD HALL



The Beamish valley has a long and fascinating history. Pockerley is mentioned in the 'Boldon Buke' (the North East's equivalent of the Domesday Book) which was a great rental survey carried out by Bishop Hugh Pudsey of Durham in 1183; the site is clearly an ancient defensive one – evidence of a far from peaceful past.

Here, a medieval strong house was built with vaulted undercroft: it still retains its original roof timbers of the 1440s. The newer Hall with its Georgian windows and red, pantiled roof dates back to about 1720. The house, gardens and farm buildings are of a kind occupied by







a yeoman, miner or tenant farmer in the early nineteenth century.

By the early 1800s the old Strong House would have been rented out as separate living accommodation, perhaps to a miner and his family or a farm labourer.

The pantry on the north side of the house is well ventilated and painted with limewash to discourage flies and bugs. Here, a variety of foods such as salt fish, pheasants, rabbits, turkey, preserves, herbs and vegetables would have been hung from the ceiling and stored on the shelves.

The large kitchen houses a range and a beehive bread oven which would be in daily use. A large pine table with sycamore top was used by the extended family and servants for main meals. The other kitchen furniture is mostly of oak, and a local longcase clock has a face painted by Beilby and Hawthorn, with a colliery scene typical of the period.



Top: Biscuit-making in the New House at Pockerley Old Hall.

Above: Candle-making in the Old House.

Opposite page, top: Kitchen at Pockerley Old Hall.

Opposite page, bottom: Gardens at Pockerley Old Hall.





Left: Master bedroom.  
Below: Silhouettes  
from c.1826.

The parlour has elegant, painted pine panelling and provincial-style furniture, whilst the family's interests in stock breeding can be seen in the fine animal portraits. Upstairs shows servants' accommodation on the north side, and the family's and dry storage rooms on the south side of the house.

The south-facing terraces contain a formal parterre garden, a cultivated vegetable garden and orchards. The plants, shrubs and tree species here were listed in the catalogues published by William Falla, whose nurseries in Gateshead in the 1820s covered 600 acres (240 ha) and were the largest in the kingdom.







Above: Gardens at Pockerley.

Right: Pantry at Pockerley.



The back kitchen has a peat fire. Note the slab of Frosterley marble and large stone sink where the clothes were washed, dishes cleaned and food prepared. A plunger churn was used for butter-making, while other tools were used for peat-cutting, pig-killing and sheep-clipping.



# THE GEORGIAN LANDSCAPE



Around Pockerley, the Museum has recreated a landscape typical of the early nineteenth century, when enclosures, collieries and early railways and waggonways were changing the face of the North East.

Fields were often ploughed in a series of ridges and furrows, prior to the invention of tile drains and mechanised farm machinery. The different conditions between the ridges (dry) and furrows (wet) established a much greater grass and plant variation.

Examples of dry stone walling, riven oak fencing and laid hedges can all be seen within the landscape. Durham Shorthorn cattle, Teeswater sheep and Cleveland Bay horses may be seen grazing these fields. All of these breeds were pioneered in the region and would have been a common sight on many of the farms of the North East at this time.







Top left: Pack pony below Pockerley.

Top right: Puffing Billy in steam at the Waggonway.

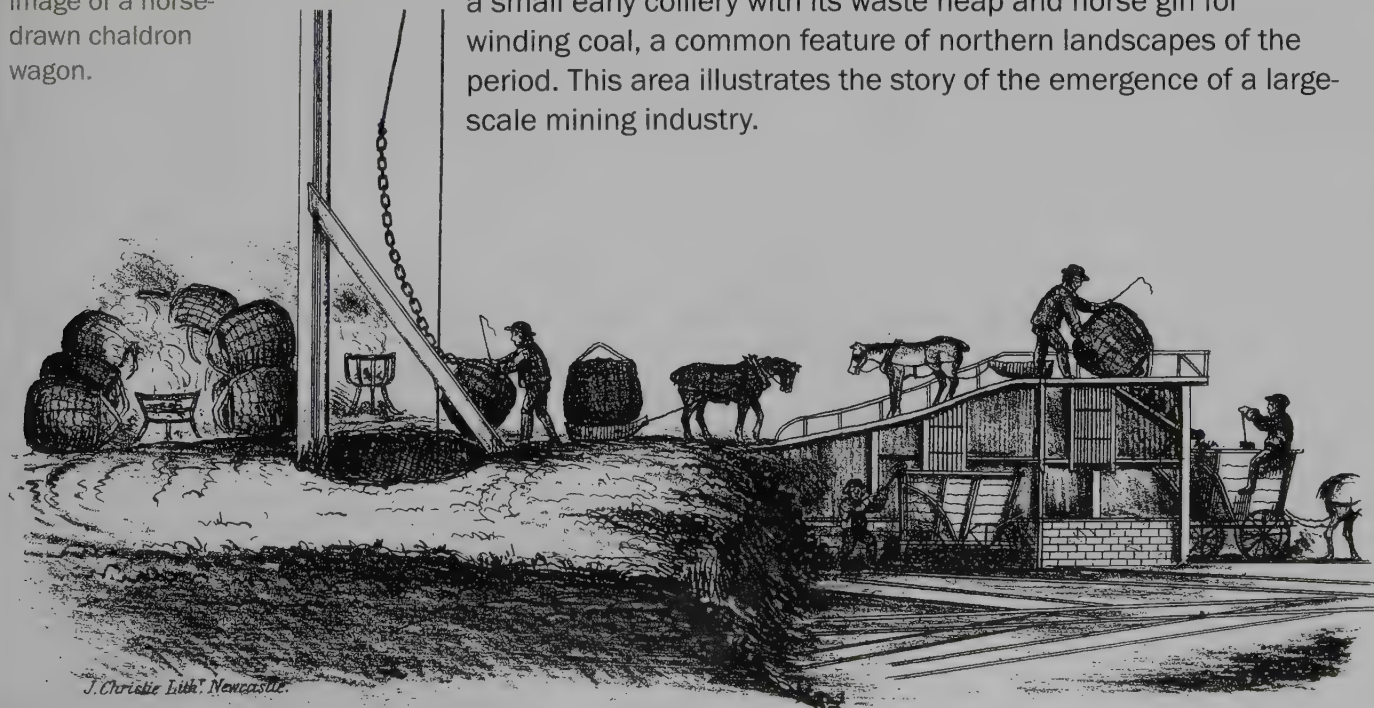
Above: Cow pasture showing ridge and furrow field.

Right: View from Pockerley across the Georgian landscape.

Below: Archive woodcut of a Georgian Gin Pit at work. Corves of coal being lifted and placed into horse-drawn chaldron wagons.

Opposite page, bottom: Archive image of a horse-drawn chaldron wagon.

A horse waggonway has been constructed following the contours across the fields below Pockerley. The waggonway leads towards a small early colliery with its waste heap and horse gin for winding coal, a common feature of northern landscapes of the period. This area illustrates the story of the emergence of a large-scale mining industry.





# POCKERLEY WAGGONWAY



In the valley below Pockerley Old Hall runs the Pockerley Waggonway. Horse waggonways had existed in the North East since the seventeenth century. The rails were normally made of wood, though after 1800 the character of the waggonways started to change when iron rails were increasingly introduced. Locomotives were tried and stationary steam engines were used to haul waggons with cables.

All the waggonways in the region were built to move coal from pit to riverside. By 1815 over two-and-a-half million tons of coal were being transported to the Tyne or the Wear every year.

It was in the North East that nearly all the early experiments with steam haulage were tried out between 1804 and 1825, culminating in the building of George Stephenson's Locomotion for the Stockton and Darlington Railway. It was George Stephenson (1781–1848) who took the credit for much of this work, although other engineers played an equally important part in these early experiments. It is certainly not true that George Stephenson 'invented' the locomotive.

The Great Shed at the Waggonway is based upon the lost buildings of Timothy Hackworth's works at Shildon, County Durham. Incorporated





in the structure is original ironwork from George Stephenson's Forth Bank works in Newcastle upon Tyne. Here can be seen information on other engineers working at that time. A bothy, or workmen's rest room, encourages visitors to sit by the fire. Visitors may also have the opportunity to experience steam-hauled travel in recreated unsprung carriages, including an enclosed one similar to that first used on the opening day of the S. & D. Railway.

One of the Museum's most exciting discoveries was an unknown oil painting of a very early locomotive of 1815, called the Steam Elephant.



Top left: Bothy at the Great Shed.  
Above: Great Shed.  
Left: Painting of the Steam Elephant of 1815.





It was designed by locomotive pioneer William Chapman for John Buddle, the most famous viewer (manager and advisor) and mining engineer of his day, known as the 'King of Coal Trade'. Built for Wallsend Colliery, parts of the engine were machined by Hawks Foundry of Gateshead.

No original design drawings for the Steam Elephant have survived, though there exists a remarkable series of sketches of it. Exhaustive research by the Museum's staff has rewritten the history of early railways and has made it possible to produce a detailed design for the engine with some 200 blueprints and specifications, from which the replica has been built. Modern brakes have been added to ensure it can be operated to carry passengers safely – an amazing project that has been successfully accomplished.

The Museum's next challenge was to design a working replica of Puffing Billy, one of the world's oldest surviving locomotives, built in 1813 by William Hedley and now in the Science Museum in London. The completed Puffing Billy replica has become a stalwart performer on the Beamish Waggonway and has also made working appearances at venues across the UK and Europe.





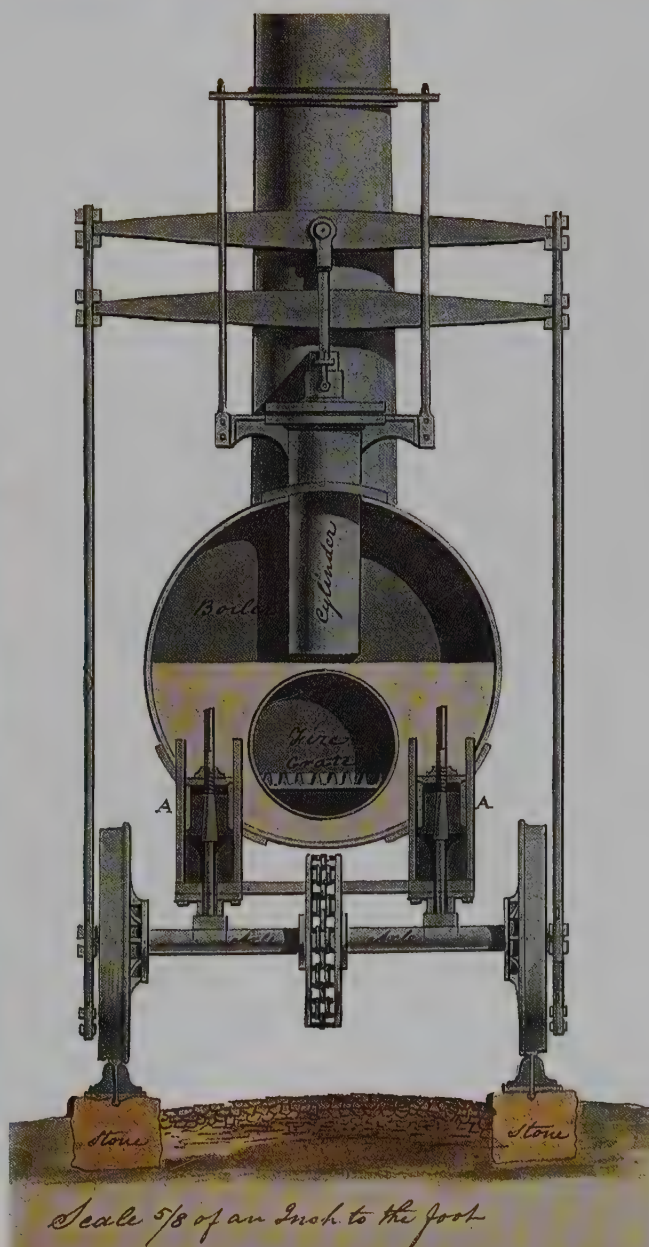


Above: Early 1800s colliery scene with horse gin, along the River Tyne. Painted by Beilby and Hawthorn on the lunette of a longcase clock by Weston of Wolsingham c.1814.

Below right: Detail from a document of 1825 by William Strickland, an American spy, sent to report back on transport and industrial development.

Below: Steam Elephant leaving the Great Shed first thing in the morning.

Opposite page, top: William Hedley's Puffing Billy.





# EVENTS



Throughout the season the Museum holds a number of historically linked additional events held in appropriate settings. The events may change from year to year and include the Georgian Fair, Great North Steam Fair, and Beamish Agricultural Show. In addition, large-scale events take place at Hallowe'en and Christmas time. The Museum also celebrates seasonal customs such as the May Day festivities, the Sunday School Anniversary and Harvest Festival.







Top: Great North Steam Fair – traction engine.

Above right: May Day.

Below left: Hallowe'en.

Below right: Harvest Festival.

Opposite page, top left: Power from the Past – horse-drawn tram.

Opposite page, right: Georgian Fair.

Opposite page, bottom left: Agricultural Show.



# LEARNING AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY



The Museum's Learning and Outreach Team provides a variety of services for a wide range of audiences across the community, also providing opportunities for volunteering and other activities. A schools' programme of activities and resources is designed to meet the needs of the National Curriculum, GCSE, GNVQ and AS and A levels, and Beamish hosts INSET days throughout the year, some in conjunction with Education Business Partnerships and LEA Advisors.

A busy hands-on activities programme throughout the year makes effective use of the Museum's exhibits. Victorian lessons in the Board School, Pit Cottage role play, Murder Mystery and Christmas at Home Farm are a few of these. From November to March, educational groups have the exclusive use of Pockerley Manor, where tallow candle-making, baking and making heather brooms give an experience of life as an 1820s servant. There is an additional charge for pupils undertaking these activities and the Education Department is happy to provide details.

Older pupils studying Leisure and Tourism or Business Studies are able to visit the Museum as part of their courses. Special needs are





always addressed and there are considerable opportunities for lifelong learning.

The re-creation of 'Life as it was' provides substantial teaching and learning opportunities for people of all ages. First-hand experience of the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the past provides a unique and unforgettable understanding of our heritage.





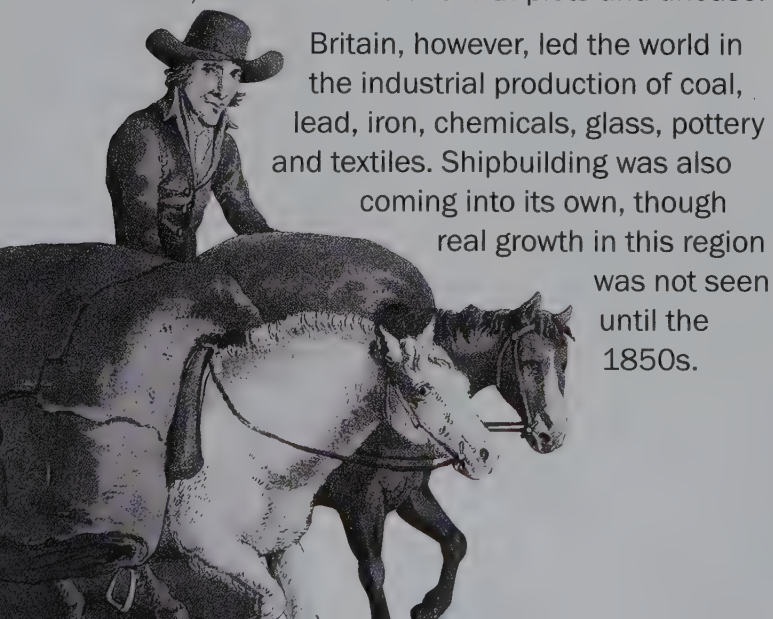
# ACROSS THE AGES – 1800 to 1914



## THE LATE GEORGIAN ERA: the early nineteenth century up to 1830

The early nineteenth century was a period of great potential, though also of social turmoil. After the French Revolution, Britain had been at war with France; Nelson was dead, having won his famous battle at Trafalgar, and Napoleon had been defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. At home, the nation which George IV ruled, was a restless one with plots and unease.

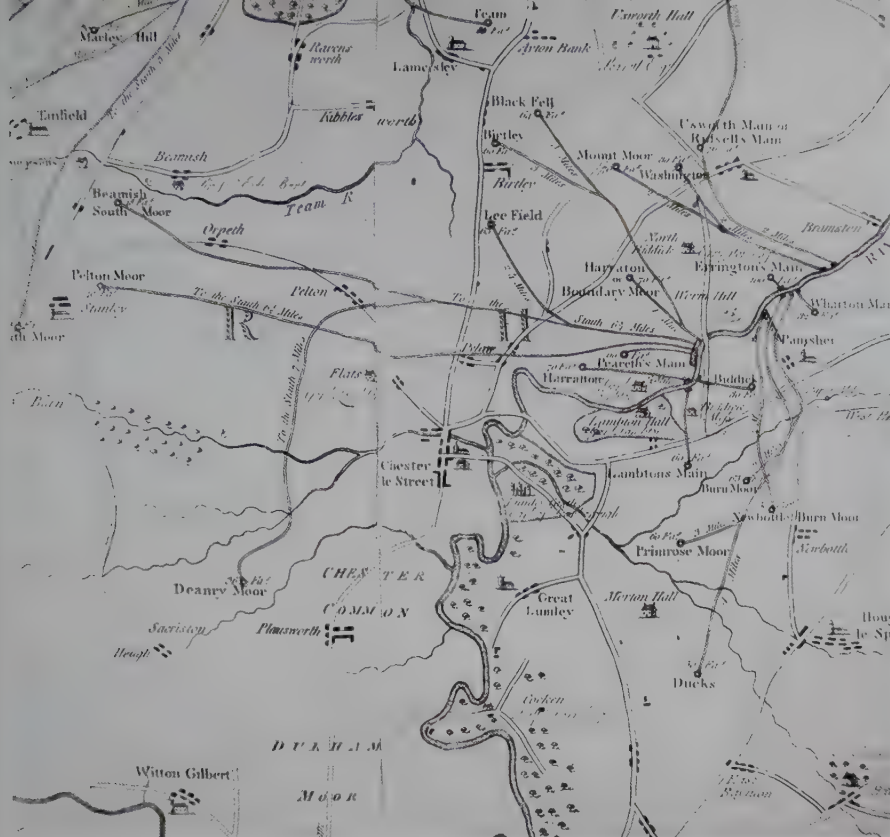
The North East pioneered agricultural developments, particularly in livestock breeding. The Culley and Colling brothers introduced new scientific ideas of stock breeding and, by the 1820s, Northumberland and Durham were seen by farmers and landowners as examples of the 'new farming'. Shorthorn cattle that were bred in the region were exported all over the country.



Britain, however, led the world in the industrial production of coal, lead, iron, chemicals, glass, pottery and textiles. Shipbuilding was also coming into its own, though real growth in this region was not seen until the 1850s.







Left: Early map of County Durham Waggonway.

Below: Middle Waggonway from John Gibson's plan of the collieries, 1788.

Bottom: Jubilee Pit, Cox Lodge, Thomas Hart, 1839.

Opposite page, bottom left: Packhorseman with his packhorses.

Opposite page, bottom right: Bewick etching of a sheep.



In the North East, coal production in the eighteenth century had been concentrated along the banks of the rivers Tyne and Wear, where the pits were relatively shallow and transport via river to sea was easy. As these seams were exhausted or flooded, improved steam-pumping methods and the development of the safety lamp allowed for a rapid increase in the number of pits being sunk to a great depth and further inland.

The increased demand for coal led to the development of waggonways and pit communities throughout the North East. It was these early waggonways or 'coal roads' that railways like the Stockton and Darlington Railway were built to replace. Opened in 1825,



this was the world's first public steam-hauled passenger railway, its success leading to the rapid adoption of railways throughout the country and the world.

## THE VICTORIAN ERA: 1837-1901

The rising population of the United Kingdom during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the growing towns and cities put much demand on the agricultural output of our farms. The hundred years or so prior to 1850 saw great improvements in the way land was managed to meet this need. Farmers

and landowners were encouraged to 'farm scientifically' and introduce new ideas and practices to make their farms more efficient.

In the North East, the improvements made to local cattle breeds were followed in the 1830s by the pioneering of the application of steam to farming, recognisable in the numerous



threshing barns with chimneys still evident around the region.

There had also been much progress in the development of horse-drawn farm machinery, allowing faster and more accurate sowing of crops and their subsequent harvest. The region had many of its own farm implement manufacturers: Mattison in Bedale, Ord and Maddison in Darlington, Symms of Newton (near Hexham) and William Elder and Sons based in Berwick. Despite the draw of people to employment in mining and heavy industry

during the nineteenth century, the greater part of both Northumberland and Durham remained rural and, in the 1870s, agriculture was still a major employer of people and communities.

Sadly, this golden age of farming was not to continue. A series of poor autumn harvests during the mid 1870s, cheaper grain imports from Eastern Europe and North America, and the invention of the freezer ship allowing us our first taste of New Zealand lamb, led to a decline and depression in agriculture that only lifted briefly during the Great War.

## THE EDWARDIAN ERA: 1901-1914

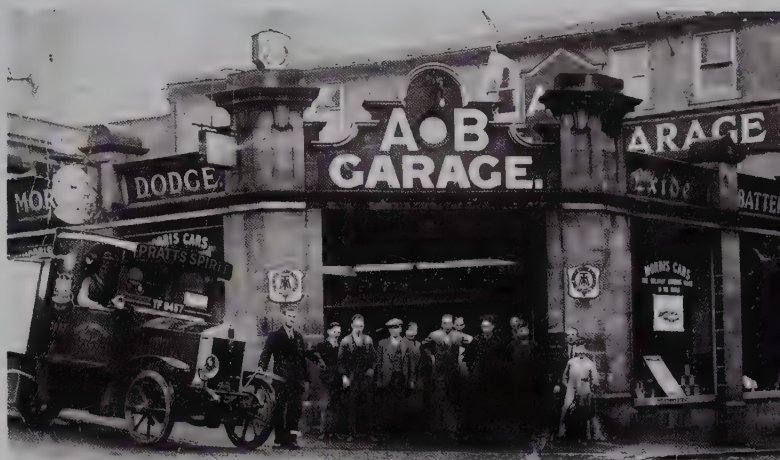


**M**ineral wealth was partly responsible for the region's economic prosperity. By 1896 Teesside was producing almost a third of the nation's iron output. Essential ingredients for Victorian industrial growth were iron and steel

for railway lines and locomotives, steam engines and machinery, girders, bridges and ships. The shipyards on the Tyne and Wear were producing two-thirds of the national tonnage.



The nineteenth century had seen a large influx of labour into the region, to work in the mines and to operate furnaces and factory machinery. Coal was used to fire the furnaces which made the iron. The iron then built the ships and railways, which then transported the coal. Additional people came, not only from the Northumbrian countryside, but also from Cumberland, Scotland, Ireland, Yorkshire and Cornwall. They brought with them their own dialects, habits and customs and were integrated into the local communities.



Above: Northumberland garage.

Left: The North East coast showing the lifeboat station.

Bottom left: Tyneside ship launch.



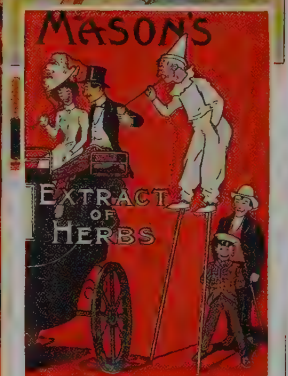
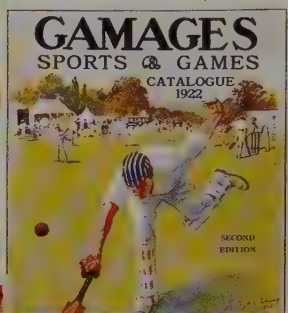
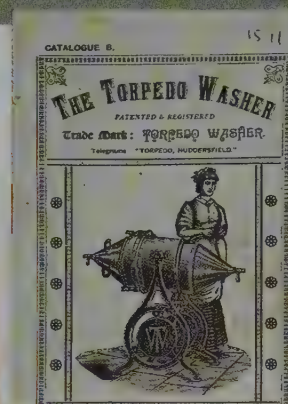
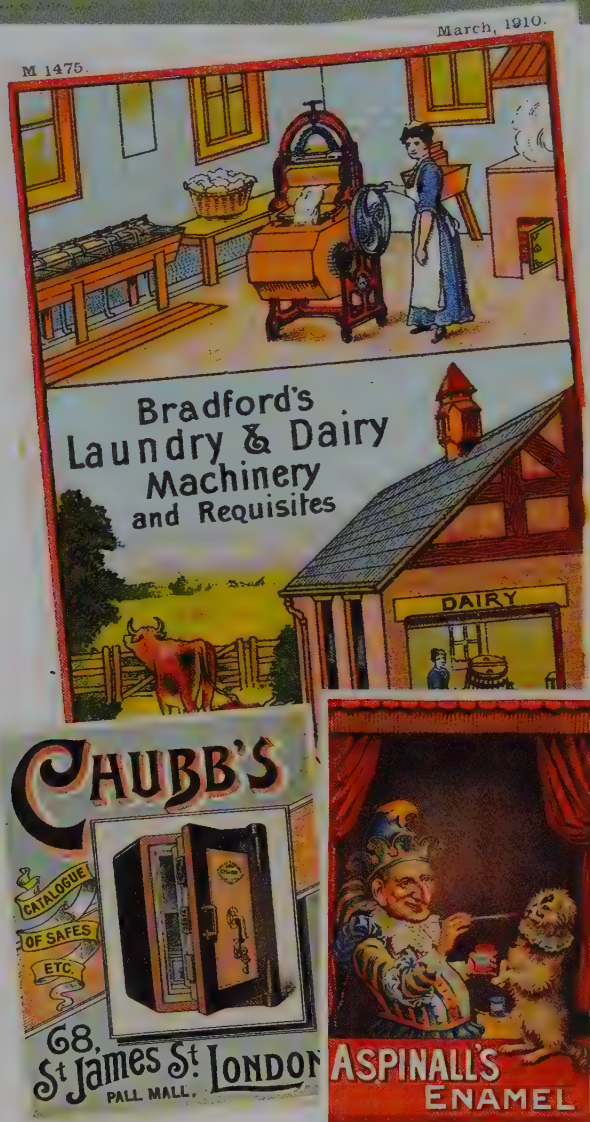
Rapid economic development brought not only wealth, but also social problems. The expansion of industry created problems of poor housing, public health and working conditions, both in urban and rural areas. Depopulation of the countryside caused abandonment of some isolated farms, and a downward creep of the moorland boundaries.

The Edwardian era was of particular importance in the history of the North East, and its vital part in the national economy; 1913 was the year of peak production for the Great Northern coalfield.





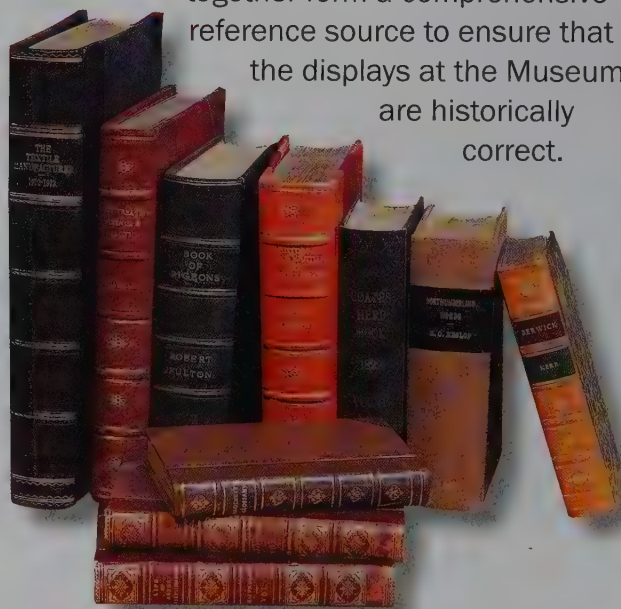
# THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS



The majority of the Museum's vast collection of domestic, rural, transport and industrial objects are already on display within the period areas. In addition, stores contain material which is still being collected for the continued development of the Museum.

The Museum has thousands of photographs, of all dates, illustrating people at work and play, regional scenes and buildings. The Printed Book Collection consists of some 64,000 published books of the late eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and a magnificent collection of trade catalogues of suppliers and manufacturers, posters and ephemera, which

together form a comprehensive reference source to ensure that the displays at the Museum are historically correct.







An Oral History Collection of recordings preserves the memories of hundreds of people from across the region, and is invaluable in recording a range of experiences of all aspects of life, as well as capturing accents and musical traditions.





The Regional Resource Centre, opened in 2001, now houses the Museum's smaller and more fragile collections. The building has been designed and built to ensure that our regional treasures are stored and cared for in optimum conditions where they can be accessed as necessary.

The above resources are available by appointment for research.

Right, top and bottom: Cataloguing Sunderland pottery and conserving quilts in the Regional Resource Centre.

Below, from top to bottom: An American view of the North-Eastern cart horse; contemporary painting of a North-Eastern colliery; naive painting of a North-Eastern greyhound and proud owner.





# THE REGIONAL MUSEUMS STORE



Many of the larger industrial and transport objects are housed in a large store shared with Tyne & Wear Museums. The store accommodates some fascinating exhibits acquired over the years: the wooden vernacular boat collection of Tyne & Wear Museums and a large engineering collection, as well as Beamish Museum's collection of North Eastern Railway rolling stock, and a number of horse-drawn



vehicles. A huge collection of enamel adverts adorns the walls. Some of these collections will be used for future projects.

Regular open days are held throughout the year. Places must be booked in advance by contacting the main Museum switchboard.

Top: The Regional Museums Store viewing gallery.

Left: The Doxford engine.



## SUPPORTING YOUR MUSEUM



Beamish relies on the support of generous people from all over the world in order to survive. Unlike nearly every other major museum in the country, we receive very little financial assistance from either local or national government to help us run Beamish.

This places us in a highly unusual, if not unique, position as a major museum in the UK, especially as we care for collections of national importance. Nearly all of our annual running costs of more than £4 million must be paid for by income from visitors, including income from admission tickets, catering and retail. By buying this guide book you are helping support Beamish, as every pound of

profit is re-invested back into the Museum and its collections.

Beamish desperately needs more funds to ensure that the Museum can continue to grow. You can help support our work in two important ways – by joining the Friends of Beamish or by making a donation to the Beamish Development Trust.

### BE A FRIEND OF BEAMISH

Thousands of people from all over the country who want to take a more active role in supporting the Museum join our Friends' group. The group has supported the Museum since the 1960s and is one of the largest Friends' groups



of any museum in the UK. Some Friends pay their regular subscription just to support our work; others to take advantage of a number of benefits that the association offers including enjoying free access to the Museum, receiving regular newsletters, taking advantage of volunteering opportunities, supporting Museum projects through Friends' donations, attending monthly programmes of talks given by a range of experts, working as a volunteer on restoration projects in the Friends' workshop (right), and joining the group for social outings and guided walks.

Friends' subscriptions pay for vital restoration work and also purchases for the Museum, and their support is often vital for any development in the Museum to succeed.

The Friends are a registered charity and welcome new members all year long. If you would like further information please pick up a leaflet at the main entrance to the Museum or visit their website: [www.friendsofbeamish.co.uk](http://www.friendsofbeamish.co.uk).

### BEAMISH DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The Beamish Development Trust encourages donations from individuals, companies and charitable trusts to help the Museum to grow. Money raised by the Trust tends to support important new developments at the Museum.

Many previous developments at the Museum could not have been achieved without its support – including the reconstruction of the Georgian Landscape and Pockerley Old Hall. But there is much work still to be done. The heritage of the North of England that has helped shape the region's character and identity is still at risk of being lost today. The Museum has ambitious plans for the future, and now more than ever before, we will have to raise most of this funding ourselves if these dreams are to become a reality.

The Beamish Development Trust is particularly focused on two areas of the Museum's work in the next two years: learning and transport. It is currently working to find funds to develop better facilities for educational groups within the Museum site, which may cost up to £0.25 million.



Finally, it is working with the Friends and others to develop the Museum's working transport collections, including the development of steam engines at Rowley Station.

All this work is only possible through the support of people from all over the country who regard Beamish with affection and pride.

The Business@Beamish scheme has three levels available to suit all businesses and budgets, ensuring that at whatever level a company joins, they will enjoy multiple benefits.

There are also many ways for individuals to help play a part in bringing the region's past to life and safeguarding its future. Many thousands of people have supported Beamish over the years by making a donation or leaving a bequest in a will. Legacies and in memoriam gifts are particularly welcome – these can be dedicated to a particular project or area of the Museum and can provide a permanent record of support for our work.

For further details, please contact the Beamish Development Trust, Beamish DH9 0RG, or visit [www.beamish.org.uk](http://www.beamish.org.uk). If you have any questions please call 0191 370 4000 and ask to speak to the Campaign Co-ordinator for the Beamish Development Trust. Thank you.



# BEAMISH UNLIMITED

In 2009 the Museum launched a new 'Beamish Unlimited' membership scheme, to attract more people from all over the UK to the Museum and help everyone get the most out of their visit.

A Beamish Unlimited ticket offers incredible value for money. Beamish has a strong connection to communities across the North-East region and the Beamish Unlimited ticket is a fantastic way of making a visit to the Museum affordable for everyone.

For the price of a standard day ticket, everyone who joins the scheme can return to visit Beamish time and time again, free of charge for 12 months from the date of purchase. Already we have signed up hundreds of thousands of visitors as members of the scheme.

It will often take people more than a day to enjoy all the attractions at Beamish – especially if you are visiting with a young family. Exploring our Farms, Pit Village and Town can easily take more

than six hours – and we know that for some people this is too much in a single day. So if you are on holiday in the North of England, you can now visit Beamish over two or three days during your stay with an Unlimited ticket – helping you make the most of your time at the Museum and deepening your understanding and appreciation of our region.

From spring through to winter, we organise a programme of exciting events and activities from steam fairs to Christmas – and your Unlimited ticket will allow entry to them all. Only a few special evening events will carry an extra charge.

So, if you didn't purchase an Unlimited ticket when you arrived at the Museum, it is possible for you to convert a day ticket to an Unlimited membership at no extra cost on the day of your visit. It is also possible to join up online by visiting [www.beamish.org.uk](http://www.beamish.org.uk).





# HOW DID BEAMISH HAPPEN?

It was 1970 when Frank Atkinson, founder and first Director, and his small band of colleagues first came to Beamish. However, the idea to establish an 'open-air museum' of the Scandinavian type goes back to 1958, when Frank had just been appointed Director of the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle, a museum largely concerned with Continental, fine and applied art. Frank's interests were much wider than this. He realised that the North-East region was changing dramatically, and that the old industries of coal mining, shipbuilding and iron and steel manufacture were disappearing, along with the communities that served them. 'It is essential', he said, 'that collecting be carried out quickly and on as big a scale as possible. It is now almost too late'. He was most concerned that the region was losing its identity and 'customs, traditions and ways of speech' were dying out. Frank proposed that the new museum would 'illustrate vividly the way of life... of the ordinary people', and would 'attempt to make the history of the region live'.

Urgency was the watchword. Frank adopted a policy of unselective collecting... 'you offer it to us and we will collect it'. The imagination of the people of the region was captured and they donated objects of all sizes, from steam engines to shops and sewing machines. A whole army camp of 22 huts and hangars at Brancepeth was rapidly filled, creating a bond between Museum and community which has never been lost.

A group of Friends actively collected for, and supported the idea of, the Museum and eventually, after much discussion and argument, the politicians of the region representing eight local authorities within the North East agreed to a joint financial and management arrangement. The search was then on for a suitable site. A basin-shaped valley



Above: Views of the developing Museum.

of about 300 acres (120 ha), with steep slopes, a river, woodland areas, some level ground and a south-facing aspect, was thought to be ideal. Beamish, one of the many sites considered and once the home of the Shafto and Eden families, was available and was ideal for the purpose, having buildings of some antiquity already in situ. The land was acquired and the rest is history.



Left: First Museum Director Frank Atkinson whose policy was 'if you offer it, we collect it'.



# DEVELOPING BEAMISH

Over the last 40 years Beamish has grown, just as was dreamt of by those who began it. Opportunity, funding, sponsorship and even fashion have influenced the directions that growth has taken. The scale of the Museum today would not have surprised its creators, but perhaps the modern world would – how many people in 1970 could have anticipated that by 2010 coal mining would already be an increasingly distant memory in the region, or that Consett works would only have ten years' life ahead of it?

Against these changes, Beamish has to regularly reconsider what the truly special and regional things are: the objects, buildings and skills that it should, or can even possibly manage, to preserve and display. There is no doubt that the Pit Village is a very special place, which will only become more special and unique as the years go by, helping to explain to new generations why their own town or village grew just how it did. More housing is needed here, particularly

of the typical 'two up two down' brick-built variety familiar to so many of us. We are already planning a typical backstreet coal-fired fish and chip shop.

The Town too will develop further. In past years a Photographer's Studio was a special attraction and we hope to recreate this again. A Baker's too, with the smell of freshly baked stotties, would be a welcome addition. Beamish has recently acquired one of the finest surviving Victorian steam roundabouts or 'Gallopers'. Following restoration, we hope that this becomes the centrepiece of a growing Edwardian Fairground from summer 2010.

A few moments' thought brings the possibilities rushing to mind; more trains, a sawmill, a windmill, pubs and cottages, barns and churches, winding houses and coal drops. We are lucky that so much was saved by Beamish – the almost legendary stores are not perhaps that big, but regularly provide 'new' delights like the Spennymoor Chip Van, currently being

conserved and restored for display. Unlike many museums the idea at Beamish is not to store objects and then to occasionally put them into exhibitions; it is to save, store and then permanently display the objects in the context or buildings in which they would have been originally seen. In the years ahead we hope that, with your help, still more will be recreated here, to remind, to educate and to enjoy.

If we are changing and building things during your visit please take care, accept our apologies for any disruption – and come back and see it when it's finished!







County Durham, DH9 0RG  
Telephone: +44 (0)191 370 4000  
Fax: +44 (0)191 370 4001  
E-mail: [museum@beamish.org.uk](mailto:museum@beamish.org.uk)  
Visit: [www.beamish.org.uk](http://www.beamish.org.uk)

Beamish is a major development sponsored since 1970  
by the Local Authorities of the North East of England.

### AWARDS

WINNER – EUROPEAN MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 1987  
AND BRITISH MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 1986

WINNER – BEST UK ATTRACTION: LONG VISIT  
2008, 2007, 2006, 2004, 2002 & 2000 GROUP TRAVEL AWARDS

GOLD AWARD WINNER – VISITOR ATTRACTION OF THE YEAR  
NORTH EAST ENGLAND TOURISM AWARDS 2007

SANDFORD AWARD FOR HERITAGE EDUCATION  
2006 EDUCATION TRUST

LARGE VISITOR ATTRACTION OF THE YEAR  
2005 ENJOY ENGLAND EXCELLENCE AWARDS

LIVING MUSEUM OF THE YEAR 2004  
THE GOOD BRITAIN GUIDE AWARDS

DESIGNATED AS AN OUTSTANDING MUSEUM  
1997 THE MUSEUMS & GALLERIES COMMISSION

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Supported by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund



We acknowledge the contribution of the PRISM grant fund and the Reece Foundation.

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Designed and produced by Ajanta Book Publishing 4/10. ISBN 978-1-84820-840-7

All photographs and text ©Beamish Museum Limited.

Project Managers: Jane Bulmer and Simon Woods. Design: Elisabetta Cavalli.

**AJANTA**  
BOOK PUBLISHING

Ajanta Book Publishing, Whitefriars, Norwich, Norfolk NR3 1JR.  
Telephone: 01603 677315





**BEAMISH**  
THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE NORTH

ISBN 978-1-84820-840-7



9 781848 208407 >

KO-514-557

